



Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People (ages 0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Swindon

SEND Annual Survey
Evaluation Report 2024

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Annual Survey Evaluation 2024

This document provides a summary of the results from the 2024 SEND annual survey as well as specific actions that we have taken/will be taking to address any concerns that have been raised. Thank you to all the young people, parents, carers and who shared their opinions in the survey responses. This has given us a great insight into the lived experiences of using SEND Services in Swindon, and helps us to demonstrate whether our improvement plan is working and how we can provide a better service for all families in Swindon.

Introduction

The SEND annual survey gathers views from young people, parents/carers and practitioners/ professionals who engage with SEND services in Swindon. SEND Services refers to all the services in the local area available to children and young people with SEND and their families. It is not specific to just the SEND Service in Swindon Borough Council.

In 2024, the survey opened on 30 September 2024 and closed on 6 December 2024. During this time, 402 people completed the survey. This is an increase of +185 responses (+85%) than in 2023 and the second highest response rate since the survey started in 2020. Results of the SEND annual survey 2024 have been compared to 2023 results. It was an online survey on Smart Survey, and was accessed via QR Code or a website link. It was promoted through various channels, including: SEND communications, internal SBC communications, and by key partners (SSFV, STEP, Education, Health and Care partners).

Who responded

Year	Number of overall responses	Responses YP	Responses Parents/Carers	Responses Professionals
2024	402 (+85%)	25 (-40%)	232 (+102%)	145 (+116%)
2023	217	35	115	67

*Percentage increase/decrease in number of responses compared to 2023 results showed in table above in brackets.

Key findings: Young People

- **Overall opinion of Swindon’s SEND Services – percentage of young people who were very happy or happy was 60%. This is an overall increase from 2023 of 2.4%, including an increase of 15.9% who were very happy.**
- **“When you need help or support with your education, your health or how you are feeling, do you get the right support at the right time?” – percentage of young people who said always or most of the time was 44%. This is an overall increase from 2023 of 8.5%, including an increase of always by 3.9%.**

These results show that there is a slow trajectory in a positive direction, but there is still work to be done, especially in relation to young people feeling they are able to access the right support at the right time.

The low number of respondents shows that a range of methods needs to be used eg: focus groups, individual work as well as surveys, to gain a higher proportion of young people’s voices to better reflect their views.

Key findings: Parents/Carers

- **Overall opinion of Swindon’s SEND Services – percentage of parents/carers who were very happy or happy was 28.06%. This is an overall increase from 2023 of 6.46% who were happy or very happy.**
- **“Overall do services in Swindon provide the right support at the right time, for the right length of time?” – percentage of parents/carers who said always or frequently was 10.96%. This is an overall decrease from 2023 of 0.86%. Parents/carers were able to give free text answers why, the main themes were: not enough support (35) long waiting lists (32).**
- **“I feel that opportunities for children and young people with SEND have improved over the last 12 months” - percentage of parents/carers who said yes was 14.7%. This is an overall increase from 2023 of 8.3%**

These results show that overall parents/carers opinions of SEND services remains extremely low and work needs to continue to improve their perceptions of the services available.

Key findings: Practitioners/Professionals

- Overall opinion of Swindon’s SEND services – percentage of practitioners/ professionals who were very satisfied or satisfied was 73.9%. This is an overall increase from 2023 of 30% who were very satisfied or satisfied.
- “Overall, do services in Swindon provide the right support at the right time, for the right length of time?” – percentage of practitioners/professionals who said always or frequently was 47.88%. This is an overall increase of 2.46%. Practitioners/ professionals were able to give free text answers why, the main themes were: long waiting lists (31), resources (30).
- “I feel that opportunities for children and young people with SEND have improved over the last 12 months” - percentage of practitioners/professionals who said yes was 19.6%. This is an overall decrease from 2023 of 11.7%

These results show that overall practitioners/professionals’ opinions of SEND services are mixed but are higher than parents/carers opinions of SEND services. There is still work to be done in relation particularly to perceptions about improvements in services in the last 12 months.



What have young people told us?

Young People were asked: “What could we do to better involve you (in decision making about your life and future)?” Here is a summary of their responses:



Young people were also asked “What could services that support you do better to listen to your ideas?” A summary of responses from young people was:

2 young people said	Use our ideas to help
2 young people said	Stop removing services
1 young person said	Get my views in other ways
1 young person said	Listen
1 young person said	School take constructive criticism

Young people told us the following services worked well for them in the last year:

• SSFV	• Supported internships/Project Search
• Social Club	• Hospice staff
• Teaching Assistants	• Specialist college
• College	• STEP
• Taking a break/time out	

Finally, young people told us how SEND Services could be improved:

5 young people said	More: Services/ money/ socials/ work experience/ employment/ learning assistants/ information
4 young people said	Less waiting times
3 young people said	Don't know/not sure
1 young person said	Earlier taxis
1 young person said	Avoid families being in crisis
1 young person said	Listen to families



What have parents/carers told us?

Parents/carers were asked whether services in Swindon provide the right support at the right time for the right length of time for children/young people with SEND. Here is a summary of their responses:



Parents/carers told us the following had worked well for their child over the last year:

• Nothing (12)	• Aiming High (5)
• Specialist provision (11)	• BeU (4)
• EHCP (10)	• One-to-one (4)

Finally, parents/carers told us how SEND Services could be improved:

46 parents/carers said	Support
28 parents/carers said	Communication
22 parents/carers said	Information on what is available
18 parents/carers said	Reduce waiting lists
14 parents/carers said	Groups/youth clubs
9 parents/carers said	Staff training

What have professionals/practitioners told us?

Practitioners/professionals were asked whether services in Swindon provide the right support at the right time for the right length of time for children/young people with SEND. Here is a summary of their responses:



Professionals/practitioners told us the following had worked well for their child over the last year:

• Multi-team collaboration (16)	• Teamwork (5)
• Professional Support (7)	• EHCP (4)
• Educational Psychology (7)	

Finally, practitioners/professionals told us how SEND Services could be improved:

21 professionals/practitioners said	Improve funding
7 professionals/practitioners said	Improve communication
6 professionals/practitioners said	More mental health services
4 professionals/practitioners said	Better access to SALT support
4 professionals/practitioners said	More timely support
3 professionals/practitioners said	Listen to concerns

What are our plans for improvement based on the survey responses?

The results of the SEND Annual Survey 2024 have been shared with:

- Managers and Directors in SBC Children's Services
- Co-production partners of the SEND Annual Survey
- Key partners in Education, Health and Social Care in Swindon

Services have responded with their plans to improve services for children, young people and families with SEND in the Swindon Local Area, and these are detailed in Appendix A – 'You said, we did'.



Appendix A – You said/We did

You said ...	We did/are doing ...
Waiting lists times are too long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the survey closed, waiting lists times for mental health support for children and young people have reduced. Telephone check-ins have been introduced for children who are waiting, and these check-ins to parents/carers and where appropriate children, provide an opportunity for advice and support and sharing resources. Performance data including waiting times are monitored monthly with ICB commissioners and also shared with Swindon Health Operational Group.
Health contributions to EHCPs are to be completed in a timely way/ are often lacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quality assurance process for health contributions to EHCPs has been introduced, this monitors response times for completing contributions and improves the quality of contributions given.
Professionals don't regularly attend EHCP Annual Review meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of process of invitation and attendance by health colleagues is planned.
Children and young people don't feel listened to, involved in decision making or that their views are sought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been shared with health team members for plans to improve in this area. Commissioning are completing regular robust contract monitoring and reporting, and annual quality audits where the provider is visited. In these processes, we check providers are gaining children's feedback. Swindon Borough Council (SBC) have employed 3x Young People's Champions specifically to listen to children and young people, and ensure their views are sought.
Low numbers of children and young people responded to the survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is recognised that the survey needs to be available in more ways/mediums to allow more young people to complete the survey, for example focus groups, partners working to support those without access to IT to complete the survey and their responses be fed back. It is planned for all partner agencies to support this moving forwards, including the SBC Young People's Champions.
Stop removing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning services with SBC have completed reviews of services available to support children and young people in Swindon, including Early Help services and Mental Health services. Information about services available can be found in the Service Directory on the Local Offer website: SEND service directory Swindon Borough Council

You said ...	We did/are doing ...
There is a lack of training for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Sept 2024, the SEND Training Modules were relaunched and again made available to all professionals/practitioners working with CYP in the Swindon Local Area. Professionals can access them via the Hub for Education, SEND Service area. SEND Service Team Swindon Hub for Education Through the Delivering Better Value funding from the Government, a package of Trauma Informed Practice training is being offered to all schools in the Swindon Local Area. Rollout started in January 2024 and continues. Through the Delivering Better Value funding from the Government, SBC has purchased a licence to access and offer Autism Education Trust training to schools in the Swindon Local Area. Plans are being made to start this rollout in Autumn 2025.
Lack of funding/please improve funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBC is in the process of completing a SEND Funding Banding Review that should make the system more fair across the board. Co-production with education partners has taken place. At this stage, it is hoped the new banding will take effect possibly from Sept 2026.
Improve communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBC SEND Service has introduced and completes monthly communication audits, to drive improvement in this area. The results are shared back with both team members and management to support improvements. These are part of a wider set of auditing measures that regularly happen to improve services to children/young people and families with SEND in Swindon.
More mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBC Children's Services has conducted a review of mental health services available to all children/young people in Swindon. More services have been commissioned to plug identified gaps in need. This means more mental health services at an earlier stage are now available to children/young people in Swindon who need them. Information about mental health services available can be found on the Local Offer website: Mental well-being Swindon Borough Council



With thanks for their help in co-producing this survey



